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education by percentage and dollar increases from year to year. But before we even begin to define our commitment to higher education, we must define with greater precision and consideration the mission of postsecondary education. We cannot afford to blindly accept without question or discussion the purposes and goals of higher education. There are questions we must seek answers to, questions I will be exploring in detail during the interim. Quite simply, we need to know what we are committing ourselves to before we can make truly reasoned judgments. Equally important is our commitment to economic development for this state and its people. The issue is far from exhausted and I will be working closely with the three task forces in this area in preparation for the next session. We also need to address the issue of state employees' salaries. A stable method has to be developed to provide and fund adequate pay increases, and I ask your help and advice in solving this problem. Let me also point out again the importance of good people and our joint effort to make our government more efficient and strong. We hire people to run our government, to implement the programs passed into law by this body. If we want good government and good programs, we cannot avoid this question of state employees' salaries. My decision to not grant a pay increase brings with it risk beyond the political risk. There is risk to our ability to accomplish the very goals of our government. Finally, I see tax fairness and equity emerging as a major topic for our discussion. We have solved what could have been a truly crippling fiscal crisis this year. Among other things, this accomplishment will allow us to discuss issues of equity in a more calm, reasonable atmosphere. I have heard it said on several occasions that it is difficult to remember that you set out to drain the swamp when you are up to your neck in alligators, and I think that statement may well characterize this in earlier legislative sessions. Faced with a pending bankruptcy of the state, it was difficult to move on to questions of policy. Now the fiscal crisis has been averted. We have made some difficult, unpopular but wholly necessary decisions. We will not be able to underwrite a spending spree next session, but we will be equipped to turn to hard policy questions at last. I urge you to bear in mind that during the interim that those policy questions will not prove easier than the fiscal questions we face this year. They will be just as difficult, just as trying and just as significant. In closing, let me commend you again on a productive session, noteworthy for the absence of acrimony and the smoothness with which it was conducted. I would like to express my appreciation for the efforts of Speaker Nichol, the committee chairs and the Clerk of the Legislature, Pat O'Donnell. I would also like to express my thanks to Lieutenant Governor Don McGinley and recognize his outstanding efforts as Presiding Officer.